

# Instructions for Laptop

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR LAPTOP ONLY

To use your laptop for the essay portion of the bar exam, you must register and pay between January 7 to January 16, 2015. Late registration will extend from January 17 to February 2, 2015 with an additional fee.

[Click here to review laptop requirements and registration information.](#)

All applicants who have timely filed an application are allowed to sit for the Virginia Bar Examination unless otherwise notified. To be admitted, you MUST bring with you a photo ID (e.g. driver's license, passport) that establishes your identity and that bears your **FULL LEGAL NAME exactly** as presented on your bar exam application. **NO ADMISSION TICKETS ARE ISSUED or REQUIRED.**

## Date and Location

The examination (unless otherwise notified) will be held at the **Norfolk Waterside Marriott Hotel, 235 East Main Street, Norfolk, Virginia, 23510 - (757) 627-4200, on February 24 & 25, 2015.** We have negotiated special rates at the Marriott (click [here](#)) for examinees, or lodging may be obtained directly from any of the several area hotels and motels, at the discretion of the applicant.

## Tickets

**NO ADMISSION TICKETS ARE ISSUED.**

## Allowed Items

The Board restricts many items from being brought into the exam. You will be disqualified from the exam if you bring any items into the exam room which are NOT on the ALLOWED items list. This means ANY item. The Board will not hold or be responsible for holding any item for you. DO NOT bring them into the exam area or room.

**ONLY** the following items are **ALLOWED**. If an item is **NOT** on this list, you MAY NOT bring it into the exam without prior written permission from the Board. A [Medical Accommodation Request Form](#) to bring any item into the exam room NOT on the allowed list must be submitted by February 16, 2015. NO EXCEPTIONS will be made.

## **Day One - Essay Sessions**

***You are allowed to bring into the exam***

***ONE Clear Plastic Bag with the following items ONLY***

<b>Number Allowed</b>	<b>Item</b>
1	Photo ID (with full legal name)
3	Black or Blue Ink Pens
1	Set of Soft Foam Ear Plugs
1	Packet of Tissues
	Keys (including hotel room key)
	Eyeglasses (without case)
	Cash/Credit Card
	Feminine Hygiene Products
<b>1</b>	<b>Laptop (NO USB Flash Drive, CDs, DVDs, or Floppy Disks)</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Laptop Electrical Plug</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>6+ Ft. Extension Cord</b>

## Day Two - MBE Sessions

***You are allowed to bring into the exam***

***ONE Clear Plastic Bag with the following items ONLY***

Number Allowed	Item
1	Photo ID (with full legal name)
6	#2 Pencils with Erasers (No Mechanical Pencils)
1	Additional Eraser
1	Set of Soft Foam Ear Plugs
1	Packet of Tissues
	Keys (including hotel room key and luggage claim ticket)
	Eyeglasses (without case)
	Cash/Credit Card
	Feminine Hygiene Products

### Prohibited Materials

UNLESS an item is on the Allowed Items list, it is **PROHIBITED** and **NOT** permitted in the exam. You will be disqualified from the exam if you bring any prohibited item into the exam without prior written approval.

#### **PROHIBITED items specifically include, but are not limited to:**

- Study Materials, outlines or other notes (including all bar review materials), in any form whatsoever (including DIGITAL\*)  
**\*YOU MUST REMOVE ALL STUDY MATERIALS FROM ANY DRIVE ON THE LAPTOP COMPUTER YOU WILL USE FOR THE EXAM.**
- Cell Phones
- Palm Pilots, BlackBerrys or other PDAs
- Wristwatch, Clock or other Timekeeping Device
- Books, Notepaper, Newspapers
- Food or Drink
- Water Bottles (water locations are near exam rooms)
- Briefcases, Laptop Cases, Suitcases
- Bags, Pocketbooks (including women's handbags)
- Wallets
- Eyeglass Cases
- Highlighters
- Mechanical Pencils
- Beepers, Pagers
- Wite-Out
- Medication

Violation of ANY of these restrictions will result in your disqualification from the Virginia bar examination. Any such items will be confiscated and you will be dismissed from the exam. The Board is not responsible for their loss, if that should occur. **Leave them in your vehicle or in your hotel/motel room.**

The use of any material or equipment for the purpose of sound suppression (other than soft foam earplugs) must have advance clearance by the Board.

### No Smoking

Smoking is NOT permitted anywhere in the examination area between 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. This means that smoking is not permitted in the examination rooms, the restrooms, or the lobbies and public areas outside the examination rooms.

### Applicants only may enter

Unless you have the Board's prior written approval, family and friends MAY NOT enter the exam rooms or congregate in the lobby areas while the examination is in progress.

### Mandatory Dress Code

Dress for all applicants MUST conform to the standards suitable for a lawyer appearing in a court of record in Virginia, *i.e.*, a suit or jacket and tie for males, and a suitable dress or suit (pantsuits are acceptable) for females. **It is preferred that you wear soft-soled or rubber-soled shoes so as not to disturb your fellow applicants, but you may NOT wear athletic shoes or flip-flops.** Violation of the mandatory dress code will result in your dismissal from the exam site and the disqualification of your exam. Click [here](#) for additional information.

## FIRST DAY – February 24, 2015 – ESSAY PORTION

### Time

**Essay Time Schedule:** Unless otherwise notified, you should report to the examination room promptly at 8:15 a.m. on the first day of the exam. Do not attempt to enter the examination room prior to that time.

### General

The essay portion (also referred to by some as the "Virginia portion") will consist of two sessions of three hours each held on the first day of the examination. The morning session of the first day of the exam will consist of five essay questions. The afternoon session will consist of four essay questions plus a number of multiple choice questions.

### Assigned Seating

Unless otherwise notified, you will be seated alphabetically, with the first portion of the alphabet beginning at the front of the room. You will find **Place Cards** and **Exam Photo Identification Cards** on the examination tables to designate each applicant's assigned seat. You should find your seat as quickly and quietly as possible and be seated. **Remain in your assigned seat for all portions of the examination.** [Medical Accommodation Request Forms](#) to request special seating in one of the main exam rooms due to a medical condition must be submitted by February 16, 2015.

### Introduction of Board

Promptly at 8:45 a.m. the Board of Bar Examiners will be introduced, and one of the Examiners will make brief introductory remarks. Please give this Examiner your undivided attention because his or her remarks will contain important instructions.

### **Distribution of Answer Booklets, etc.**

Following the introductory remarks each applicant will be given a set of answer booklets containing the morning essay questions and a very important card. Remove the questions and place them **face down** on the table. Remove the **Pledge Card** and lay the questions aside.

### **Applicant ID Number**

The preprinted number on the Pledge Card is your APPLICANT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER for the entire exam. This is the **only** form of identification that should appear on any answer booklet or answer sheet for any portion of the examination. **DO NOT write your name or initials on any answer booklet or answer sheet.**

### **Pledge Card**

The Pledge Card contains your pledge to behave with honor and to report to the Examiners any indication of cheating or a violation of the rules of the examination by others during the examination. Legibly print your full legal name (first, middle and/or maiden, last name and any designation of "Jr.", etc.), **in ink**, on the line provided on the upper right-hand corner of the card. After you read the pledge, sign your name on the signature line and print your current mailing address on the lines provided.

### **Place Card**

Check your name as it appears on the **Place Card** and correct any error you may find. Indicate on your **Place Card** the address to which you would like your examination results mailed. No change will be made on our records unless you have made such change on the Place Card. Print your APPLICANT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER on the upper right-hand corner of the Place Card. Check the right side of your Place Card. If your application is missing a required attachment(s), it will be listed on the right side of the Place Card and this means that your application IS NOT complete. Following the missing item(s) is an important NOTICE concerning your responsibility with respect to the missing item(s). The Character and Fitness portion of your application is a separate and ongoing process. If required information is missing from your Character and Fitness Questionnaire, you may be notified of the omission(s) after the exam. (Note: Receipt of these General Instructions does not necessarily mean your application to take the February 2015 Virginia Bar Examination is complete.) The staff will collect both the Pledge Card and the Place Card early in the morning session.

### **Exam Photo Identification Card**

Check your name as it appears on the **Exam Photo Identification Card**. On the lines provided on the *reverse* side of the card, sign the card in ink and enter your **APPLICANT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER**. You must retain the **Exam Photo Identification Card** during the exam administration for identification purposes and to assist you in correctly posting your Applicant ID number on all your answer booklets and answer sheets. This **Exam Photo Identification Card must** be displayed, **face up**, during all sessions of the examination. **Another type of current personal photo identification that bears your Full Legal Name exactly as presented on your bar exam application (e.g., driver's license)** must be placed face-up on your desk. You should take your Exam Photo Identification Card with you during lunch breaks and at the conclusion of the first day of the exam, but remember to bring it with you to all remaining sessions of the examination to be used as identification and as your reminder of your correct Applicant Identification Number. **You must return your Exam Photo Identification Card at the conclusion of the second day of the exam.**

## Instructions

Follow the Examiner's instructions carefully to ensure that you have the proper Applicant Identification Number for use on all your answer booklets. The Examiner will indicate when you may look at the essay questions, and all applicants will begin each session at the same time. No one may leave the room during the examination except when it is absolutely necessary. A Member of the Board or staff will be in or near the examination room at all times. If you have a problem during the session, you should seek the advice of the Examiner. Also, if you think you find a mistake in the drafting of a question, please report it at once to the Examiner so that any mistake can be corrected.

## Tips for Answering Essay Questions

All of the essay questions are intended to test not only an applicant's understanding of fundamental legal principles and rules, but also an applicant's ability to (1) identify legal issues raised by hypothetical facts; (2) separate material which is relevant from that which is not; (3) set out the legal rules applicable to the issues and facts; (4) present a reasoned analysis of the relevant issues in a clear, concise and well-organized composition resulting in (5) a conclusion that follows from your analysis.

Before you undertake to write an essay answer, READ THE QUESTION THOROUGHLY, analyze the facts, and form in your mind what you think is an appropriate answer. DO NOT merely answer "Yes" or "No" to any essay question; state clearly your reasons, as the Examiners give great weight to your reasoning in evaluating the essay answers. BE SURE you answer the question being asked. If a question has more than one part, be sure you answer all parts. Select the corresponding alphabetic letter on the computer screen for each multiple choice question.

No paper is available during the Essay portion of the examination (unless your laptop crashes and you have to handwrite any portion of the exam) and none should be brought into the examination room. You may make notes on the margins of your essay questions.

## At the Conclusion of the Laptop Portion of the Exam

**Laptop Session:** A stop writing announcement will be made at the end of each session. Anyone who types or marks an answer after the stop writing announcement has been made will be disqualified from the examination. **No one may leave until final time has been called and you have been instructed on how to save your answers to a USB flash drive (provided).** During the final 15 minutes of each examination session, you must remain in your seat as a courtesy to your fellow applicants.

# SECOND DAY – February 25, 2015 – MULTISTATE PORTION

## Time

**MBE Time Schedule:** Enter the examination room by 9:00 a.m., and take the same seat you had for the first day of the exam. Place your **Exam Photo Identification Card** and **Personal Photo ID** face up on the table in front of you.

## Pencils

Examinees should bring a sufficient number (maximum of 6) of sharpened #2 lead pencils to mark the answer sheets of the Multistate (MBE) portion of the examination. Sharpeners will be available for use before the session and at the lunch break.

### Instructions

In the morning and afternoon sessions of the Multistate portion, follow the directions of the Examiner carefully in filling out the information required on the computer answer sheet. If the information on your Multistate computer answer sheets is not gridded correctly, it may result in a later distraction to you during the examination to correct your answers.

The answer sheets from the Multistate portion **MUST** be marked in pencil. No extra paper is available during the MBE Examination and none should be in the examination room. Examinees may make notes only in the margins of the Multistate question booklet.

### At the Conclusion of the MBE Portion of the Exam

**MBE Session:** A stop writing announcement will be made at the end of each session. Anyone who writes or marks an answer after the stop writing announcement has been made will be disqualified from the examination. **No one may leave until final time has been called and all MBE answer sheets and booklets have been collected. Instructions on collection of materials will be given at the end of each session.** During the final 15 minutes of each examination session, you must remain in your seat as a courtesy to your fellow applicants.

### Exam Photo Identification Card Collection

At the conclusion of the final portion of the MBE examination, you **MUST** return your Exam Photo ID Card. Instructions on collection of your Photo ID will be given at the end of the final session.

## EXAMINATION RESULTS

### Name Changes

**NO** name changes will be made two (2) weeks before the exam or two (2) weeks before results are released. A certified copy of a marriage license or a certified copy of a name change order **MUST** accompany all requests for a name change. Click [here](#) to download the Name Change Form.

### Address Changes

Examination results will be mailed to the address indicated on your Place Card. Subsequent changes in address must be provided to the Office of the Secretary **in writing** as soon as possible. A **Change of Address Form** is available on our website at [barexam.virginia.gov](http://barexam.virginia.gov). NO address changes can be guaranteed to be made two (2) weeks before the exam or two (2) weeks before results are released. If you wait to change your address until immediately prior to the release of results, we may not be able to change your address, which will cause a delay in the receipt of your results and, should you pass, the very important registration materials required for attending the swearing in ceremony. Under these circumstances, **make sure you have a forwarding order on file with the post office** because we will not release results to anyone over the phone and we cannot resend registration materials due to the high postage cost. **We will not accept address changes over the telephone.**

### Notification

After all papers have been graded and results tabulated, each applicant will be sent a letter by first-class mail which informs the applicant whether or not he or she passed this examination. **APPLICANTS, THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS should NOT call the Office of the Secretary of the Virginia Board of Bar Examiners inquiring about when results will be released.** NO INFORMATION will be given out over the telephone, and calls of this nature only impede the processing of the scores.

## Internet

After the results have been mailed, names of the passing applicants will be posted on the Internet on the Board's website at <http://barexam.virginia.gov/bar/barresults.html>. The list will be in alphabetical order. **AGAIN, NO RESULTS WILL BE GIVEN OVER THE TELEPHONE.**

# VIRGINIA BAR EXAMINATION

## PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING SCORES

The February 2015 Virginia Bar Examination will consist of nine essay questions and ten multiple choice questions on Tuesday, and the Multistate Bar Examination (MBE) on Wednesday.

**MBE Score:** The MBE has 200 multiple choice questions, 10 of which are pre-test items that do not count toward your final score. Because questions at one administration of the MBE might prove to be more or less difficult than those at another administration, the MBE score is scaled for each administration to adjust for such differences. This procedure is designed so that it will be no harder or easier to earn a given MBE scaled score on one administration of the MBE than on any other administration of the MBE.

**Essay Score:** Each essay answer is graded on a 10-point scale, and each of the ten multiple choices is graded right or wrong. Each correct multiple choice is worth 1 point. Thus, the maximum essay "raw" score is 100 points: (10 points x 9 essay questions) + (1 point x 10 multiple choice questions).

As a group, the essay and multiple choice questions asked on one administration of the Virginia Bar Examination could be harder or easier than those asked at another time. To adjust for these differences, the essay raw scores are converted to the same scale of measurement as that used to report the MBE scaled scores. As a result of this step, the average essay scaled score in Virginia will be equal to the average MBE scaled score. This method is designed to permit the passing standard to remain as constant as possible from one exam to the next, so that an applicant is neither rewarded nor penalized for having taken one exam or another.

## DETERMINATION OF MINIMUM PASSING SCORE

**Minimum Passing Score.** In the course of grading the essay questions over a number of past examinations, the Examiners have reached a consensus on the level of performance necessary for an applicant to demonstrate his or her minimum competency to practice law in Virginia. On the basis of this evaluation, the Board has determined that it is necessary for an applicant to achieve a Total Scaled Score (also known as Combined Weighted Total or CWT) of 140 in order to pass the Virginia Bar Examination.

**Total Scaled Score/CWT.** The Board of Bar Examiners has determined that the essay scaled score should carry 60% of the weight of the examination and the Multistate scaled score should be allocated 40%. Accordingly,

$$\text{Total Scaled Score (CWT)} = (.40 \times \text{MBE scaled score}) + (.60 \times \text{essay scaled score})$$

**Reread Policy.** When the initial grading of the Examination has been completed, the Board members meet to regrade the essay and multiple choice papers of those applicants whose initial Total Scaled Score (CWT) is near but below passing. Usually the Board rereads the papers of approximately ten percent of those persons taking the exam whose initial scores are below the minimum passing score. After the regrading, all scores are final. All grading is done anonymously.